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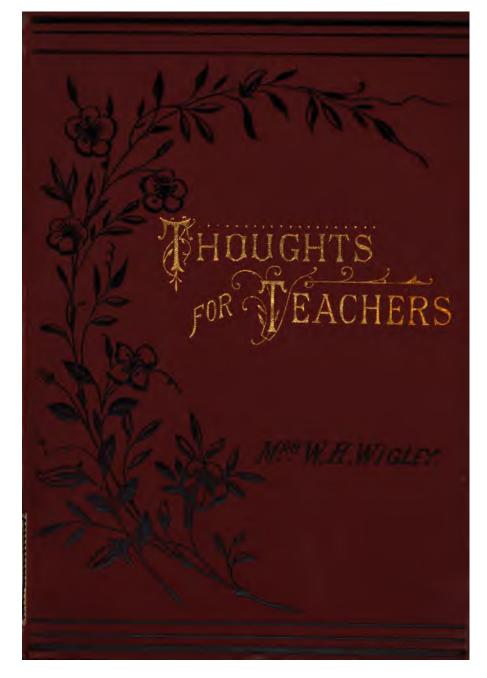
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# THOUGHTS FOR TEACHERS.

#### BY

## MRS. W. H. WIGLEY,

#### AUTHORESS OF

"Workers at home," "Our home work," "The marshfield maidens,"
"The merryweathers," "Claims for Kindness,"
"Thoughts for mothers," "Thoughts for children,"
"Thoughts for servants," "Thoughts for young women in business,"
ETC. ETC.



## LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET

MDOCCLXXXII.

270. g. 984.

Ballantyne, Hanson and co.
Edinburgh and London

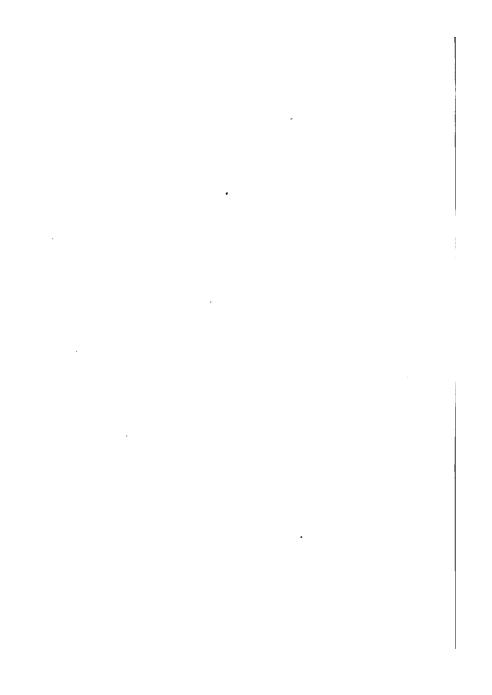


## PREFACE.

HIS is a very modest little book. It comes to you, dear friends, claiming to be no learned treatise, but simply to suggest thoughts.

It has been my lot for many years to go in and out among those who teach, and I cannot but be aware that they are in no little danger of forgetting some very important matters connected with their work.

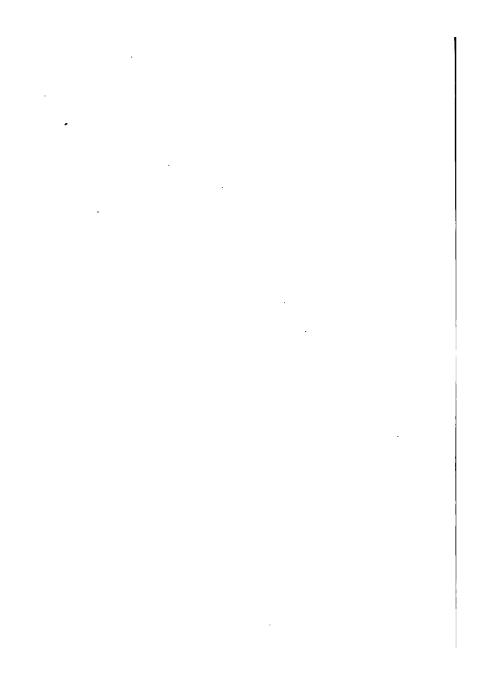
Just to remind you of such things the pages have been written. May it accomplish this end.





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# THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG TEACHERS.

I.

# About your Work.

OU have all heard of Michael Angelo, the great Italian sculptor and painter; but perhaps you have not all heard the following story respecting him.

One day at the beginning of his career he was walking with a friend, when he came upon some blocks of rough marble. Probably it was in the neighbourhood of Carrara, whose marble hills furnished from their thirty quarries the choicest material for the sculptor's work. One block especially attracted his attention. It was lving,

dirty and rough hewn, heaped around with rubbish and refuse and green with moss. Doubtless many eyes had glanced over it carelessly, without detecting in it any especial adaptability or excellence. But his eye rested on it, his hand touched it. Then turning to his friend he said, "In this rough block there lies concealed an angel, and I mean to set it free." The block was ordered to be sent at once to his studio to be worked upon by his skilful hands, and ere long Michael Angelo's kneeling angel went forth to the world, winning all hearts by its wondrous beauty.

Now it seems to me that this story may be looked upon as a beautiful parable, setting forth the subject of this present little paper—a teacher's work. Every uncultivated, undeveloped nature, is like a block of unhewn stone. It needs the skilled and loving hands of those who train and teach, to set the angel that is within free from all that keeps it a prisoner, and send it forth a thing of purity and beauty to fill its

place in the world. Literally, then, a teacher's work is to remove everything that fetters or disfigures, and to aid in the development of all that is good and lovely in a child's nature.

Does every teacher in the vast army who lay claim to the name realise the truth of this? Is this the feeling with which they meet their classes day after day? Dare we hope it is so?

I said a vast army. It is difficult indeed to form a just notion of the number. In Colleges and High Schools, in Board Schools and Voluntary Schools, in Sunday Schools and Night Schools, thousands of persons are employed in the work of teaching. Thousands! yea, rather hundreds of thousands!

Look at our elementary schools alone. There are employed in them, throughout the length and breadth of the land, over thirty thousand head teachers. These have under them a large number of assistant teachers and pupil teachers.

Then there are the Sunday schools. Wherever

a church or chapel exists, there a band of earnest workers from among its worshippers join together in this work of teaching the young.

Teaching them what?

Perhaps there is no question of the present day which occupies a larger share of attention than this the question of education. There are systems, and plans, and codes, which often prove a puzzle even to the initiated. Teachers and their necessary qualifications; teaching and its extent, its success, or its failure, are great matters now, about which great minds occupy themselves. To keep a school, or instruct a class, is no longer a simple thing which everybody, or as was once the opinion, which anybody can do. The infirmities of the flesh no longer constitute a special recommendation for it. Those who are halt, or deaf, or maimed, those who are too sickly or too old for other employment, have not now, as once, the privilege of turning to this as a last resource. Teaching is an art—a science requiring method

and aptitude—and an especial fitness for this work, above all other work, if it is to be successful work.

Yes, great men with great minds, we said, puzzle over this matter. Years are spent investigating and experimenting on old systems of education, and in considering new ones. And there is a good deal of agitation among teachers themselves, in order to make it a law that none but qualified persons shall be allowed to teach at all.

And there is as much diversity of opinion as to the extent of the teaching as there is as to its processes. Some cry out, "We have no business to limit in this matter. Give the children the chance of learning everything—enlarge their minds, extend their ideas, elevate their aspirations. Let them learn something of every 'ology' and 'ism' under the sun. Store their minds with useful knowledge, and you will make them good citizens."

But others think differently. "Cramming the heads with all this is not likely to benefit them," they say; "the children get a smattering of everything and a good knowledge of nothing. They leave off before they have even acquired the least idea of what there is yet to learn. If they have 'passed' in so much of the subject as they are required to go over, they think they have done the whole affair. And with everything unfinished in their minds, no wonder it all gets into a tangle, and that knots and snarls warp their judgment and disfigure their whole lives. Let them learn to be good men and true, and they will be wise enough."

How is it possible in such a paper as this, then, to deal in any just measure with a subject so divided?

Just because there is one common ground where all teachers may join hands, setting all plans and schemes and opposing opinions aside. The highest aim in the heart of every real true teacher should not be popularity, not "passes," but THE GOOD OF THE TAUGHT.

A child stands before a teacher as the block of marble stood before the sculptor. Every power for good needs guiding into a right channel, every capability and especial gift or beauty needs bringing out. Whatever hinders such development must be removed, chip by chip, until, with the best and purest of its whole nature untrammelled, it goes forth to do its life work.

But you will say, "Doubtless the sculptor knew what he was doing when he chose that block of marble. He saw in it special beauties and qualifications; it was just what his contemplated work required. We have to do the best we can with all and any material that comes to hand."

It may have been so; I cannot tell. This I do know. The great merit in the whole matter lay in his skill, and not in the marble. He met with flaws, doubtless; discolourations which

spoiled its purity, and cross grains which would have altered, but for his care and gentle dealing, the whole perfection of outline. But he managed them all so that the marble should stand, at last, at its very best,—be that what it might.

And consider his aim. He sought to bring out of the stone he chiselled a kneeling angel, the figure of one who stood near the throne of the Highest, and yet a figure bending in reverence and worship. Blessed indeed will it be for our country, when the great aim of all who have to do with the teaching of her young, have for their aim the production of something even a little below this—kneeling men and women! then we may well be content to leave the angels in the Master's hands.

The good of the taught! Good for this life and good for the life which is to come. We may seek to give the first alone,—to make them clever and bright and quick and intelligent; and we leave them as vessels without anchors, to become only a miserable wreck at last,—all the more to be deplored because of the bright promise of the beginning. Better give them a knowledge of God and His Word, and make them peaceable, honest, true, and industrious men; and though they make little noise in their day and generation, they will at least do no harm. Many men have become castaways through a proud conceit in their own worldly wisdom; but never yet was a man a castaway because of his purity of life and the holiness of his heart.

But, thank God, the two things are not incompatible. "Godliness is profitable for all things, having a promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Because the things of this world are not to occupy the first place in our hearts, are we therefore to think them of no consequence to us? We are to labour, working with our hands the things that are good; we are to follow after charity, which doth not behave itself unseemly; we are to avoid

even the appearance of evil, and are to give attention to whatsoever things are pure, true, honest, just, lovely, or of good report.

"Full often, too, Our wayward intellect, the more we learn Of Nature, overlooks her Author more; From instrumental causes proud to draw Conclusions retrograde and mad mistake. But if His Word once teach us—shoot a ray Through the heart's dark chambers and reveal Truths undiscerned but by that holy light; Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptized In the pure fountain of eternal love, Has eyes indeed; and, viewing all she sees As meant to indicate a God to man, Gives Him His praise and forfeits not her own. Learning has borne such fruit in other days On all her branches; piety has found Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer Has flowed from lips wet with Castilian dews."

The life that now is—the life that is to come—a teacher's work has to do with both.

The children who come to us for instruction, and who listen to the words which fall from our lips, will carry the effect of our teaching to the end of their lives. They are not machines, by which a certain amount of work is to be accomplished, or a certain amount of money to be earned. They are living, thinking, immortal beings. They come to us plastic and easily moulded. The impression we stamp upon them may never be effaced. Many and many a hungry and thirsty little soul has gone forth from the teacher's hands fed with stones and not with bread. Many a bright intellect has been cultivated and strengthened, while the soul's yearnings and needs have been unsatisfied.

Teachers! dare we run the risk incurred by a work half done? dare we "take tithe of mint and rue and every other herb, and pass over judgment and the love of God"? Have we no shrinking of heart at the thought of the "Woe unto thee" which must precede those other words of the Master, "These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone"?

The children's good! It is a simple matter,
(5)

and surely one that will need no exemplification. Whatever will make them truer, nobler, wiser; whatever will increase and extend their influence and improve their position; whatever will make their character more trustworthy or their work more valuable; which will strengthen their faith and quicken their zeal for good,—these things it is our province to teach.

It is possible to go to a class with the Word of God in our hands, and to leave the lesson at last without having called forth one good or holy aspiration or resolution.

It is possible to meet a class for the teaching of any subject, and yet leave behind us a sense, a tone, of something far deeper than any book learning itself could establish.

If we really desire the children's good—all good for them, and the highest good more than all—it must flow out in our every word and affect our every action. As well say to a candle, "Your business is to burn wick—you have nothing to

do with shedding a light," as to expect a religious teacher not to exercise a religious influence.

Paul was learned more than all the apostles. He did not despise wisdom of all kinds. What was the especial end of all his teaching? Here are his words:—

"Teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 28).

And again-

"Pastors and teachers for the perfecting of saints, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man" (Eph. iv. 11-13).

Did I not say a teacher's work was something like setting an angel free?





#### II.

# About your Qualifications.

T is a good thing for us all that we should be able to estimate highly the work of our daily life. No matter

what our occupation may be, the manner in which you carry it on depends mainly upon the opinion we hold regarding it. Those who write trade songs know this well; and there comes into my mind, as I write, extracts from some of these, each of them holding up the honour of the work of which they speak:—

"The fire brigade is a famous host,
In danger and need they are at their post.
'House on fire'—off they run;
Facing danger comes like fun."

- "A farmer's life is the life for me; I own I love it dearly."
- "There's high and low, there's rich and poor, There's trades and crafts enow, man; But east or west, his trade's the best That kens to guide the plough, man."
- "We dwell in the meadows and toil on the sward,
  Far away from the city's dull gloom;
  And more jolly are we, though in rags we may be,
  Than the pale faces over the loom."
  - "Print, printers, print—a noble task
    Is the one we gaily ply."

We might go on making numberless selections, in one or other of which almost every kind of work is said to be best, and noblest, and greatest.

Now there is nothing contradictory or absurd in all this. The songs are made for the singers who have themselves chosen the calling of which they sing. Why do they choose it? Because to them it appears the most desirable, it suits their talents and their capabilities, and so they prefer it to all others—they like it best. Those who are made to work at the trade they dislike never sing songs in praise of it; you may depend upon that. Their work, poor things, is not likely to be held in much honour by any one, for they themselves do not honour it. The very first necessary qualification, in order to secure success in any kind of work, is that the workers shall take delight in it, and the greater the importance of the work, the greater the necessity.

And I think you will agree with me that the highest and noblest work of all is that which has to deal with persons and not things. This requires the skill, the thought, the care, and the thoroughness of our best and cleverest. A mistake or a blunder made with inanimate things is bad, no doubt, although often it can be rectified or substituted; but those who are shaping the minds and training the hearts of human beings need to operate with fear and trembling. If these are warped, or defaced, or marred, they will carry the scars and disfigurements to the very end.

You are a young teacher. You have chosen to go, Sabbath after Sabbath, to meet a class of little ones for the sake of teaching them the truths of the Most High God—yours is a blessed work! Or you are employed daily in a school—teaching is your chosen profession, perhaps. Well, if you chose it, I have no need to ask you if you love your work. I trust you made yourself quite sure of this before you finally decided. For there is no question that the very first qualification of a teacher, Sabbath-school teacher, or day-school teacher, is love.

Love to the work and all connected with it. Love of knowledge, and a love of imparting it to others. A warm love to children, and a hearty sympathy with them because they are children. Turn again to St. Paul's definition of love in I Cor. xiii., use the revised edition, if you have one, and see if there is any one thing mentioned as love's exemplification which teachers do not need. Prophesy, knowledge,

faith, are nothing without love; tenderness, yea, even martyrdom, is nothing without love.

"Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things: love never faileth."

And this love is something more than a fondness for one or more than one child whom you
teach. You could be fond of individual children
without being a teacher at all. But as a teacher
your love must manifest a large-hearted tenderness, capable of entering into even the most
minute details and difficulties, and dealing gently
and lovingly even with offenders. You may feel
especially drawn to certain children—they are so
bright, or clean, or good; or there is a peculiar
sympathy between you, the child catches your
thought before you utter it almost, and it is so
pleasant to teach such.

Yes, it is pleasant; but love hovers round the ones who do not respond in this way, hovers and lingers even more yearningly than over those who do. We can well understand the truth expressed in the words which tell of the joy evinced at the finding the lost sheep or the piece of silver. We know that a mother's heart thinks oftenest and most lovingly, not on the darlings who are safe, but on those who are in danger.

With this sort of love every teacher should regard the classes they teach—every true teacher will so regard them. They will rejoice in some—lovingly rejoice; they will yearn long over others—lovingly yearn. And the last will call forth more effort, more prayer, more thought, yea, more love than the rest.

Love to the work as the work; love to the actual training into shapeliness, and delight in every evidence of development, small though it be. Just as we lean over some frail little

plant, and hail with joy every wee shoot that shows itself, every small leaf that unfolds, so anxiously do we watch for growth—germination—caused by our lessons, and our love is all alive in the watching,

Germination—growth—from darkness towards light, from ignorance towards knowledge, from trickiness towards truth, from meanness towards nobleness, from the earthly towards the heavenly, from the human towards the divine.

And surely a second qualification must be patience. How beautifully this quality is expressed in the words, "suffereth long and is kind." We may suffer long, much against our will; we may find others resisting instead of following up the influences with which we seek to draw them, and we may think ourselves justified in manifesting our displeasure about it; there may be sharp words and frowns, but this sort of thing is not patience, for patience is kind. Kindness is not a thing we usually

manifest towards ourselves, you know. We do not give the name to that exercise. Kindness is the manifestation of our goodwill to others.

All teachers certainly have to suffer long. Are all teachers then patient? Not unless they are also kind while they suffer.

You can easily settle about this qualification so far as your own responsibility goes. How are you affected by the multitudinous peccadilloes of the children you teach? Think of the very worst one now—possibly your whole circulation appears to give a rush as the name or the particular features of this one or that one comes into your mind. "That child is a trial," you say. "Every day work undone, and my wishes disregarded—they spoil my teaching and upset the class." All quite true, I have no doubt. I said just now, all teachers suffer long—the difference is in the way the suffering is borne—is yours a long-suffering kindness?

I have seen a great many cases of trying

children. I am quite sure of this,—it is a bad thing to make such children marks of public disapprobation. "Give a dog an ill name and hang him," applies to more than dogs. I am an old teacher—thousands of children have called me by that dear name—and now I say to you, "No matter what a child may be, no matter how black the character it bears when it comes under your care—put all that in the background; let the child feel that you are striving to hide and not expose its faults, and ten to one the child will work to aid you."

Patient, long-suffering, and kind. Your class will know such a one tries and grieves you—they will know it from your loving look and from your, if possible, gentler tone towards the offender; but don't tell them so. Don't hold up such as examples of warning; they are dark enough spots—don't give them an extra coat of paint. If once you do this, if that poor waif once feels, "teacher made them all look at me or laugh at

me," your most powerful hold on that child's heart is gone. Love—to the child as a child, and as a child only. Patience—long-suffering kindness in dealing with it.

And then comes "tact." "Tact," that way of dealing with any evil thing so as not to call into action another evil thing—surely a teacher needs this quality. If prevention is better than cure nowhere else, it is better than cure among children.

I have seen a class of children fidgety, full of mischief and fun, ready to rebel against any restraint. I have seen a teacher quiet and gentle go to that class, and by a few quiet words and a smiling, earnest look, put all to rights. Order was restored, work commenced, and was carried on with a zest which showed the children liked it.

I have seen a class of children orderly and industrious, scarcely needing any supervision. I have seen a teacher with a great display of enthusiasm and zeal go that class, and in two minutes upset everything. Those who were occu-

pied became idle, those who were quiet became noisy.

One of these teachers had tact, the other had none. One quieted, and soothed, and settled, the other stirred up and irritated—stroked all the fur the wrong way.

Do you know Dickens' "Great Expectations"? I often think Mr. Pumblechook is a just caricature of a teacher without tact. Let me remind you of one sentence, I think in these words—"He continually stroked my hair up towards the crown, and L felt in doing so he stroked my whole nature exactly in the reverse way that was natural to it."

A teacher with tact can see at once "which way the wind is blowing," and by introducing some other element, or a contrary current, will alter its course altogether. Tact stands a teacher in good stead at all times; tact in giving lessons, tact in managing general cases, tact in managing special cases—it is never superfluous. Want of

it may lead a teacher to remove one difficulty and to make a dozen; to put down one piece of mischief and incite twenty other pieces of mischief. Remember our definition, tact is preventing one evil without raising another.

And then a teacher needs firmness—not harshness nor hardness-but gentle, immovable firmness. Whenever I have stood by a class and have heard one child or another coaxing, saying, "Oh, teacher, please do," or, "Oh, teacher, you might do it," then I know that teacher has given way before. When little ones are managed by a firm, gentle hand, they never coax or wheedle. They understand at once that they may expect or not expect such things without any telling. "You may try if you like, but I know you will not get it, teacher does not approve of it." And the child who says these words has no longing or yearning for the thing the other desires; they know it is out of the question altogether. Give your children as few rules and as few commands as possible. Remember you are to lead them and guide them into a right path, far more than you are to forbid them a wrong one. But when you have made a rule—a necessary, just, good rule—then carry it out unflinchingly, and always let the children thoroughly understand why you make it; remove all ignorance or misunderstanding or misconception about it. "It is for the good of all of us, and you must help me to work for the general good." And if the heart of the class is as the heart of the teacher, and it should be so, there will be little difficulty in the matter.

But while a teacher must be firm, decided, prompt, she must have a winning manner. Such a manner as will draw all the little warm impetuous hearts along with her in every part of her work. Draw hearts, I said. Yes, draw them and hold them. There is a good deal of truth in this saying: "It is possible to do even disagreeable things gracefully." A child may not like to be managed; nay, it is not unlikely

that he may much prefer being let alone altogether, but the business may be conducted with pleasure as well as profit to all parties, notwithstanding.

Try, then, to win your children over to your side. Let the feeling be, "Teacher and me, against the world," and teacher will do pretty much as teacher likes.

And, last of all, we must not forget the greatest qualification of all: Conscientious sincerity and thoroughness in one's self.

If any one were to offer a large fortune to a person who should actually train or teach a child, or grown person, to believe what they themselves did not believe, and to put the acquired faith into works which the teacher never practised, I should hope to win it soonest by practising upon the grown person rather than upon the child. For I believe that in the one case it is possible that the desired results may be obtained by the inward convictions of mature age and

ripened thought, irrespective of any teaching whatever. And, further, it is possible to say to one advanced, "I do not believe and practise these things, but they are true and righteous nevertheless," when such words could not be said to a child.

What we wish the children to be we must be ourselves. I do not believe that a child receives into the heart a lesson of goodness or holiness from the lips of a teacher who is neither good nor holy.

God has given to all animals some defence against evil. I believe that He has given to children, the most susceptible of all His creatures of real thorough influence, the power of discerning such thoroughness and reality. It is the same both in good and evil; teach the right and practise the wrong, or say the wrong and practise the right, and the child will do as you do and not as you say. It is as though we could not disguise from a child our actual opinion. We may think we

are succeeding; the little one may be thoughtfully weighing our words; when all at once there comes the steady look into our eyes, which settles the question at once. And if they are not too shy they will say, "Teacher, you don't do it, do you?" or, "I don't think teacher believes it, it's a hoax!"

"As with the people, so it is with the priest."

"Behold, thou that . . . art confident that thou art a guide of the blind, a light of them that sit in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest that a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest that a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law through breaking of the law, dishonourest thou God?" (Rom. ii. 17-23).

And, again, in another place, St. Paul speaks of the diversity of gifts or talents to be exercised in the household of God: "If prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth to his teaching."

But he ushers in the passage with the words, "I beseech you, brethren, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." And he winds it up with the words, "Let love be without hypocrisy."

Yes; and this is the beginning and the ending of all work for God, and especially a teacher's work. Love first, and then sincerity to crown all.

We can maintain order without love; we can secure passes without much troubling ourselves with upright sincerity; we may allow ourselves to become machines; we may look upon the children as machines—grant-earning machines—

and we may so miss the whole end and object of our work, that ourselves and our profession may sink lower and lower, till its holiness and its nobleness are lost in its success as regards percentages. But where this is so, where the truth of God which makes the soul free—free from vice and selfish conceits—is not the backbone of all our teaching, we must not be surprised that in our land there shall multiply not wise men, and good men, and true men, but fools. Fools who say in their hearts, "There is no God."





## III.

## The Material.

What I am—my especial gifts
Are tools by which my work is done;
The greater excellence in these,
The nobler will that work become.

But those whom I must teach and train, It matters little what they are; To make all better, this my aim, Only the worst will need most care.

Most praise is due to those whose skill Finds out the best in every one; And trains the love, and guides the will, Till what they do shall be well done.

work if every child who came before us was precisely the same in capabilities and disposition. Our world would be a very different place to what it is without variety. We

are so constituted that nothing wears upon our spirits and energies like sameness. We may have our favourite occupation, but if we are obliged to persevere in it for a long time, we get so disgusted with it that we seldom or ever turn to it again willingly. Or we may have a natural taste for some especial flavour, but if once we get too much of that flavour, the very mention of its name is enough to create a nausea always after. The work that has most change in it, is certainly the pleasantest work.

We have all heard that under the old prison discipline, when skilled and clever men, with minds all alert, and heavy dullards whose ideas seemed stagnant, were alike compelled to the same aimless occupation, the cleverest minds often gave way under the fearful monotony, and their owners passed from the prison to a lunatiq asylum.

Now, surely, no work presents more change to the worker than the teacher's. Not only does each subject to be taught require a method almost all its own, but each child to be taught has different features, different surroundings, different dispositions, and different capacities. And upon the cleverness and excellence of the teacher, depends the power to deal aright with every one.

A first step to effective training in the case of individuals, then, is to feel the individuality. We are too apt to speak and think of schools and classes, and not of "the child" and "the children." If our children do not present themselves to our minds as separate beings, possessing each one a complete and perfect existence, with a mind of its own, powers of its own, faults and virtues of its own, a history and circumstances of its own, and a future of good or evil of its own, then they are not likely to be benefited by our teaching. We may train them to move as a class—to work as a class—yea, even to learn as a class, but when they are not in the class, we have

produced no effect or change whatever. The inner life of the child has not been touched by our influence. They are as completely and altogether strangers to us as though we had never looked upon their faces, or heard the voice which issued from their lips.

Now, in order that each child shall awaken some especial interest in our bosoms, it is necessary that we shall know them. How are we to sympathise with the little life, when its trials and difficulties are all unknown to us? How many of us can remember the regret we have felt at hearing of sad things which might have been prevented, "If I had only known about it." And, alas! how many lives have suffered through our lack of knowledge?

Every teacher should seek for opportunities of learning all about the things that concern their children. What are their homes like? With what influences are they surrounded? Have they any especial difficulties to contend with, or

special temptations to withstand? There are so many things which affect a child's brightness and general intelligence. Its food, its health, its general treatment and surroundings—things it cannot control itself, and is in no way responsible for, and yet from which it suffers acutely. Get to know what these are.

But you may say, "It is impossible, there are so many children under my care. I cannot know them. I must deal with them as a mass." Then try, at least, to get to know all who are inclined to give you trouble. If you let the ordinary well-behaved child pass, if you are compelled to take it for granted that it is well with them, try and find out about the rest. Seek to become the familiar friend of the naughtiest and the dullest. And when you know them, you will be able to deal so much more gently with them, and so much more effectively too. You know this is so. Contrast your feeling now at this moment towards some particular child under your

care whom you know well, and some other of which you know nothing. That child to you, and you to that child, are on a different and far more natural footing than the rest. There is between you a wonderful sympathy. They hear your orders, and know your wishes; and there is awakened in them, immediately, a desire to see the one carried out and the other fulfilled. And on your part, in managing the child you cannot forget certain things connected with them which softens or shapes your dealings, and makes your management all the more powerful for good. As far as possible it is your plain duty to know your children. Set yourself to work to find out how far this is possible, and do your best with it.

Now let us notice some of the different kinds of character you will have to deal with, and perhaps, from out of the same experience of which I have spoken before, I may be able to give you a few hints.

Let us start, first of all, with what should be

a grand principle with all teachers. Every child would rather be good and obedient—would rather work than be idle—would rather win praise than blame, unless under some influence powerful enough to control its own desires or intentions. No child is determinedly bad; without training opposed to order and obedience, the chances are that a child left to itself would choose to be orderly and obey. But children are not left to themselves by any means; they are warped, and twisted, and worried and compelled often to do things which the good and noble tell them they should not do. But in spite of this, don't lose faith in them, not even in the most trying.

A gardener goes to a plant which ought to bear rare and lovely blossoms. He finds weeds round it, rank and foul, and its branches are almost matted together with the clinging of the nightshade, which grows into its very centre. Well, does he say, "It is of no use to look for blossoms here; other plants of a like kind may yield them, I don't believe this one can." Certainly he does not. He is angry and sorry that it has been so neglected, but at once he sets to work to remedy the mischief. All his skill is brought to bear upon the work in hand. He stoops over it; he roots up and cuts away without flinching all that should be removed; he untwines the tendrils that cling, and takes down the leaves which shade. He gives the plant a chance. He knows the beauty it can display, the sweetness it can scatter; he never once thinks it will belie its nature, but in doing his best for it he feels sure it must do its best for itself.

Weeds and noxious things: unholy sights, unholy sounds, unholy deeds—we may not be able to remove them altogether, but we can clear them away from the child, and set it free in great measure, if we keep our hope and faith as to the result. Directly we feel "it is no use trying with that one," then it is no use our trying, whatever another may be able to do. When once you

have really lost all faith and hope in any child, and in your power to benefit it, then for your own sake, for the child's sake, yea, for the sake of all good, pass that child over to the care of another; it will get no benefit from you.

Perhaps the most trying child to day-school teachers, nowadays, are those who do not receive that which they teach; who are about as wise when the lesson ends as they were before it began, only not quite so comfortable.

Now this class may consist of the inattentive, the idle, or the naturally dull.

A child is always occupied with something; if its mind is not on the subject you are putting before it, it is busy over something else. And generally that something else is presented to them by their outward senses—their sight, for instance. They see something going on which distracts their thoughts, sends them wool-gathering to places and with people in no way connected with the lesson, so they lose what they ought to gain.

Now it is the teacher's place to remove, as far as possible, all such distractions; their eyes should take in the whole class; no movement or pursuit apart from the subject in hand should be permitted. I have seen teachers stand before classes teaching, who have reminded me of those guides who show people over our cathedrals of the town. They have a certain amount to say, and they say it; if people don't listen, it's not their fault. Some children, finding no interest in the lesson, began to amuse themselves, some to amuse others; they were all busy about something, not even looking at the teacher, while the different heads of the lesson were discussed one after another, with great perseverance, by the teacher.

But this was a stranger teacher. If you do your work well, and if there is the right bond between you and the children, they will always know you have something ready for them that it is worth their while to attend to. It is quite possible for a teacher's manner to command at-

tention at first, and to hold and chain it afterwards all through the lesson. Is it so with you? Remember the children are hungry little beings after knowledge; if you give them strong meat instead of milk, is it their fault if they reject it?

Look well to this. Say, "Other people can get my class to listen and attend; so will I." Prepare your lesson carefully. Make sure you quite understand just how much knowledge you wish to impart at this particular time. Remove all outside impediments to attention. Awaken and interest your children, and keep them awakened and interested.

But we said, children do not receive our teaching from idleness. There are some easy-going, merry-hearted darlings, who quite believe it's a pity to bother about anything. They are generally smiling, and rosy, and plump; and though they do the least work, they certainly are not deficient in the matter of play. The energy they can manifest only makes the contrast greater

when you consider the small amount they do manifest to meet your wishes.

It would be cruel to punish these children. They are just the ones who will learn to hate the things that bring them trouble and suffering. You want them to love their lessons. You must not punish them then. Make it to their interest to rouse themselves, not by misery, but by the desire to please you. They love you; let them know how much pleasure you feel when they work nicely. It is a good thing that these children are most susceptible of praise. Watch for chances to give them a little. If you cannot praise all their production, praise the best part of it, and wind up by saying, "Don't you think you could manage to do the whole as nicely or as correctly as you did this? Try, will you?" Lead them on like this, and they will soon work for love of you, if for nothing else.

And then the dull children, poor things.

Well, they are a trial in week-day schools,

because of the mistaken system of giving them just as much work to do in a year as the clever ones. So teachers feel they have to drive them.

Find out if a child is really deficient in natural ability; if so, don't worry them and yourself by attempting impossibilities. Let them go on steadily and slowly. All the pushing in the world won't keep them abreast of those more talented.

If they are to do any good they must have time. Do not get impatient with such children. In almost every case they would learn quickly if they could. Nay, is it not painful to witness their effort to receive what you desire to impart to them? And the very greatness of that effort only adds to their mystification. Perhaps now and then we may feel justified if we lose our patience over those who won't learn; we must lose our patience over those who can't learn—NEVER. The very brightness of our own minds should make us be

sorry for those who have not received so much as we are blessed with.

But there are other causes which make dull children besides lack of natural ability.

How many of the poor little ones with whom you have such difficulty are properly nourished, or properly cleansed? How many of them breathe sweet, pure air? How many of them are heavy with hidden sorrow, and dull with hopelessness and misery?

What is behind that apathetic, unchildlike face? What hardships have produced that hardened, careless manner? Oh! if each child who comes to us to be taught wore, stamped upon their brows in legible characters, the real story of their lives, their hard, unlovely, unloved lives, could our hearts be stirred with any other feeling towards them than tender pity?

Very many there are, thank God, whose faces tell us at once that they are well cared for, and that they lack nothing which love can procure for them. But in others the spare clothing, the pinched features, the stunted growth, the heavy eye, the general want of animation and life, all tell a sad story. Can these children be goaded and pressed? Are these the ones from whom we should exact feats of memory? Faint from want of food, is it any wonder that problems in decimal fractions are not worked correctly? Or with a heart bruised and sore with some hidden sorrow, can they be expected to give undivided attention to their tasks?

But if we need to be harmless as doves in dealing with these poor lambs, we shall want the wisdom of serpents in regard to the clever ones. In these times, when so much importance is attached to a child's ability, there is great danger that the little mind will not rightly estimate its qualifications. It will see that the quickest wins the highest place and the most valuable prize, and escapes correction. "To be clever, then, must be better than anything." This is the

feeling that makes our little ones miniature men and women—which gives them airs and conceits, and lifts them out of all humility and meekness.

Talent is at a premium, and goodness nowhere, in our school curriculum only too often. And it is very difficult to prevent this-very difficult to show to a child's mind how vast and deep are the fields of learning, and that they are but on the very edge; very difficult to make them feel that there are other and far more important things than learning. And yet we should strive to bring such knowledge about. It is possible to regulate the tone of the whole school by your wise management, so that everything shall occupy its due and proper place. You can show by your teaching, as well as by your smile and manner, how much you value evidences of evil resisted and good followed up; and you can lead the quickest and brightest to recognise that we have nothing but what we have received, and

that "to whom much is given, of him also much shall be required."

It is quite possible, unintentionally, to sow seeds of vanity and self-conceit in a child's heart. We must be on our guard against this. We should not address ourselves especially to the quickest in our teaching. It is very hard to keep our eyes perfectly impartial, because naturally they will seek other eyes which show most eagerness to understand us, as well as the largest sympathy with the thought which stirs us. Many and many a bright, clever child, in whose ready intelligence the teacher took especial pleasure. and who seemed perfectly to learn the lesson, has gone away and borne no fruit. And many a silent, unnoticed little one, has treasured the good seed in the heart, and it has yielded fruit a hundredfold.

To forget ourselves in the children! Yes, it is hard. In this as in everything, self-abnegation is foreign to our nature, and yet with their good for our chief aim, our own pleasure will sink into insignificance.

Perhaps we are the only beings different to those in their daily surroundings, with whom they come into contact. In their eyes we are encircled with a kind of halo; we can scarcely tell how we are watched, nor how much importance they attach to our most trivial word or deed. Children draw conclusions at once, and they are very sensitive. Let us take heed that we "offend not one of these little ones, for in heaven their angels do always behold the face of the Father."





## IV.

## Ways and Means.

E said there was a great difference in the children who come to be taught—there is also a great difference in the teachers.

There are some who are born teachers; there are others who acquire the art by great diligence and perseverance; there are others who, from the lack of these qualities, or from natural unfittedness, never actually teach at all.

To the first of these, all connected with their work is a pleasure and joy to them; to the second, also, it is a work to be highly estimated and persevered in; while to the last it never proves anything but a drudgery.

Lately I heard a pastor soliciting help for his Sunday schools, where teachers were short. He

said, "Those of you who feel anxious for the good of the little ones, and who have time at your command, should come forward and engage in this blessed work."

Now, I could not agree with him—for surely it needs more than anxiety and time to make a teacher.

And remember, in saying this I am not taking such teacher into consideration at all. I do feel most certainly that to go with little love to children naturally, and still less power of attracting them, or interesting them, and to shut up one's self for one hour or two hours on God's rest day, in order to make an effort for their good, is a kind of martyrdom that no man ought to endure or inflict. But setting this aside, the one aim of all teaching, namely, the good of the child, is altogether lost sight of if the teacher is "not up to the work."

You know it is so. You may not have had very long experience, but as a child you learned this much. Some teachers came to your class, perhaps; there was no attempt at disorder, or irreverence, or idleness on the part of the children, no visible effort on the part of the teacher. Yet the lesson was given, the tasks learned, the truths impressed and carried home.

But others came, and there was with the same children rebellion, levity, insubordination. No good was done—scarcely any attempted—the children departed with relief and the teacher with disappointment.

This kind of thing is happening now, over and over, both in our day and Sunday schools. It is a sad thing. Schools are established for the good of the little ones, and inefficient, incapable teachers have not the power to bring about that good.

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given unto us, let him that teacheth wait on teaching."

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another." "There are diversities of gifts."

Those of us who are gifted with teaching power must employ our talent for the Lord's service. And those of us who, by training or acquirement, feel ourselves competent for this work, can do no less than join their ranks; but if we have no gift for it, or if we have not been specially qualified for it, we had better let it alone altogether.

Remember, too, the sum and substance of our qualifications—love—sincerity. Love to the children—all unselfish and entire. Sincerity in the truths taught both by faith and practice. You may have the latter, but what about the love?

How do you feel about your work? Why did you choose it? If your heart is full of tenderness for the little ones, and full of earnest zeal to make known to them the truths so precious to yourselves, then your work must be blessed. One of our great educators, after speaking of plans and methods to be used by teachers, says: "And when you have done all else, 'pray for the

children." Nay, rather, before we do anything, let us pray for them. Pray that their knowledge may be useful to them, and that God's truth may be sown in their hearts. Pray for this one or that one especially. Seek to get His aid in every case of difficulty or anxiety,—He, who never can fail us in wisdom, or strength, or judgment, He only can rectify mistakes and prevent errors.

God knows every child better than we know them—their difficulties and temperament are before Him always; but for our own sakes let us spread the case of each one before Him. None but those who have tried it can tell how much comfort we gain in being exact as to the details of our needs. It does us good to tell an earthly friend every little item in the matter which makes us anxious.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Have you no words? Ah, think again, Words flow apace when you complain, And fill your fellow-creature's ear With the sad tale of all your care."

Why should we be content with generalities in speaking to God? "He fainteth not, neither is weary."

This is the very first of all the ways and means by which a teacher's work is to be carried out successfully. Pray always for your children; this alone will do more lasting good than all other schemes and systems combined, in which prayer has no place.

A teacher's work may be said to be twofold. The children must be controlled, managed; and instruction must be imparted;—there are right ways of doing both these things. Let us give a few thoughts to management first. Perhaps the most perfect form of government is that of a well-ordered home. A loving and wise mother among her little ones rules them without effort; they have such implicit confidence in her love, that they are glad to find opportunities of carrying out her wishes. They all form part of a community of which "mother" is the head, and they

know all her orders are for the good of the whole.

So in a class or school. The family may be larger, but the feeling ought to be the same. Each one is a member of the whole; "if one member suffer all the rest suffer with it." All should be interested in the good of all. Guided by a skilful, wise, loving teacher, it is this unison, this sympathy one with another, which makes management easy. The sense of responsibility rests on each one, and love to the teacher, love from the teacher, and all that comes in the train of that love, makes the tone of a school or class what it ought to be. A look of sorrow will be punishment enough; a gentle word of reproof sufficient correction.

Do you ask, is this sort of thing possible? Can it be that we can introduce such a system as this amid all the pressure and grind of our daily work? Without any hesitation I say, "Assuredly it is possible." You have the love, you have

the sincerity, the thorough conscientious practical sincerity, and with all your heart you believe in the efficacy of fervent prayer. Then such a system is easy. You aim at the permanent good of the children, and you have just the means at your command which shall bring that good about soonest.

But take care you do not deceive yourself. You may have other aims and yet teach. Do not be disappointed if then the management of your class or school be a great difficulty to you, and oftentimes little short of a failure. If you sacrifice this your first duty to minor matters—the standing of your school, the amount of the grant, or your own ambition, can you expect other results which you do not work for?

How many vexed questions concerning this part of a teacher's work occupy the public mind at the present time? If children are not managed by love, if the teacher has no time, or no inclination, or no capability for this kind of rule, then how are children to be managed?

It matters not where the school, or who is the teacher, I have no hesitation in saying, that the kind of rule I have attempted to describe, is the only one which can be of any permanent benefit. A severe teacher, by punishment, inculcates fear and dread; the children under such a teacher are the ones most difficult to manage, and beyond a certain point they become unmanageable. His punishment can only go so far, they find that out and defy him.

Make up your minds never to subjugate a child by brute force; there is good in every one. They may come to you from the worst homes and the most unprincipled parents. Scenes of vice may be familiar to them, and daring and defiance stamped upon their every look. Poor things! they have had enough of severity—they would probably think scorn of your very worst.

You remember the little black Topsy thought her new mistress a poor, incapable kind of creature, because of the mildness of her corrections.

"Law, Miss Feely, dun know how to whip. You should see my old missus, gar! she did make de flesh fly!"

Well, with such children, what can be done? If your love cannot reach them, nothing else will. And then, if the tone of your school is what it should be, all your children will be on your side, and any case of insubordination will be cried down by the public voice. This is a great instrument in your hands. A child may be daring to those in authority, but they flinch before the disapprobation of their fellows.

But you may say, "What punishment am I to use, some means of correction are surely necessary?"

I do not think the word punishment is at all necessary. It is a very easy thing to make a child understand that a failure in duty must

always be followed by some unpleasantness to itself.

"It is necessary this should be learned, dear, or you will be behind all the rest, and you will lose your interest in the lessons to come. When can you learn it for me? You did not do it yesterday. Will you do it now, or this evening?" I do not think there would be many cases where the child would not get the lesson without any further trouble. But if they do not do this, and if the same thing occurs again and again, what then?

Set yourself to find out the cause. Is it idleness, or dulness, or pressure of other employment?

Whatever it is, deal with it tenderly, gently, firmly, and without heat or anger. You may show sorrow and trouble, if you will, but not temper. Never, never allow yourself to set the work to be done and accompany it with a threat. Believe your children want to please you. Consult with

them about the possibility of getting in so much. "I think you can manage this if you are industrious, dear. Go and try your best." Such words will set the child to work far more readily and heartily than, "You will get"—well, so and so— "if it is not done."

But you may say, "All this takes such a lot out of a teacher. This constant control over one's self is exhausting."

There is only one answer to this.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

"Neither was guile found in His mouth."

"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that after I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

"Let patience have her perfect work. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promises."

But suppose, after you have done all, there

shall come such wrong-doing under your notice that you are compelled to do something to put it down, what then?

Keep the matter as private as possible. By no means make a public exhibition of the evil thing. I have very much doubt as to the wisdom of ever teaching a child a lesson by bringing it face to face with a wrong done. I would rather never "make an example" of any one.

Is it not a well-known fact that public executions in no way deterred people from murder, but
that they were the means of exciting and calling
into action all sorts of bad passions?

So, whatever may be the evil thing to be corrected, let it take place privately "between thee and him alone," either in your own home or some quiet place. There draw the child to you, and, holding the little hand, speak of the fault as it appears to you, and the consequences which must follow if every one gratified their propensities. Then let the child justify itself, if it can;

perhaps there are "extenuating circumstances" in the case of the little one, as often there is found to be in the case of men and women grown. Give the poor wee culprit the benefit of every one of these, and, after all, kneel down and ask the Master to help this His little erring one to sin no more.

"But the punishment," you say? Well, after you have done all I have mentioned, and you look down into the moved face and troubled eyes, carry out your scheme of punishment—if you can.

"How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?"

"I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but, Until seventy times seven."

Ah! every experienced teacher knows that it is because cases of petty disobedience, or forget-fulness, or carelessness are not prevented, that they have to be punished.

Every such teacher knows also that the more

they punish for these things, the more they will have to punish.

I could take you at this present moment into two large schools. In one not a single child has suffered punishment by the infliction of pain for years. In another "the cane" does its work ten, fifteen, twenty, yea, even thirty times in a day. And in which school, think you, is there the most perfect order, the most thorough work, and the happiest faces? In which one does the teacher have the least trouble? Or, to go back to our real motive, which system works most good to the children?

Take these thoughts into your heart. You are young, you are forming plans and habits, and are settling into what will be your method all your life probably. What is the result of what you have done up to this time? How are you developing? Never mind anything about the influences that are round you. What sort of a teacher are you training yourself into?

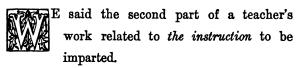
Does your heart give a great leap at the prospect my words open out to you? Do you see how much there is for you to do single-handed, with no help but that which arises from your own method and your own prayers. Don't be disheartened. Remember your future success depends upon your present effort. It will have to be up hill work for a time if the children have been managed differently, but don't give up. The day will come when you will look back thankfully on this time as that which had most influence on your after career, and you will be able to say, "I fought the battle with myself in the early days of my profession, so I have no battle to fight with my children now."





### V.

# Ways and Means—continued.



Now the efficiency of all instruction depends mainly upon two things. First, preparation for the lesson by the teacher; second, co-operation during the lesson from the children. We will consider these points in turn.

First, then, every teacher should prepare the lesson before attempting to deliver it. This need not be a very ceremonious affair. It would be impossible to prepare notes of every lesson, even if such a thing were advisable. The kind of preparation to which I refer is that which will prevent any mistake or loss of time. A glance

over the matter to be imparted will be sufficient in many cases, but even this will make the work you have to do *readier* and pleasanter to yourself. For your own sake, your mind should be quite clear on certain points before you meet the class.

First—How much is to be taught at this particular time?

Second—Do I know it myself?

Third—Is it quite within the capacities of the children.

If we go to our children without marking out a certain portion as enough to be mastered at that time, our lesson will be remarkable for nothing so much as its incompleteness.

It is necessary in every subject to carry the learners on, step by step, and to complete one step before we commence another, binding the whole together at the leason's close. For we may take up any matter and go rambling on as long as time permits, without any one being much the better for the effort.

You have decided for you, or you have to decide for yourself, how much of any subject you should get through in a given time—a year perhaps, or six months. Well, make a skeleton syllabus to guide you. Mark out so many stages, so many lessons, and the outline of the course of each lesson. A glance at this afterwards will show you the plan to be carried out, and the way in which one lesson is to be made to fit into another, so that the whole may be connected and entire.

Such a plan will produce much good. Methodical work has always greater efficiency than work without method, and the teacher will feel familiar with the ground to be trodden, and will produce confidence and more thorough work on both sides.

And every teacher knows there is scarcely a lesson but one or more questions may arise which they may be unprepared to answer, without some little preparation. The children may require some point elucidated—it may be the very point

upon which the success of the lesson will depend mainly—and from lack of a little previous thought the teacher may fail the pupils in their need.

Look over every lesson, then, and strengthen any weak point in your own information. See that every difficulty is quite clear to your own mind, else how can you teach?

And when it is so clear and plain to yourself, don't fall into an opposite error and think all the world must know what you know. We are all too apt to soar above the minds of our little ones. "Surely they must know that. I cannot remember the time when I did not know it." Very likely, but there was such a time, nevertheless, and each of your pupils may be in the precise condition in which you were at that time. Don't take it for granted that the children must know anything connected with what you wish to impart. Make sure about it, impart the needed information if it is not there, and proceed. Your lesson will be without any foundation if you neglect this.

And be simple and familiar in your language and your illustrations. Do not use long words when short ones will answer the purpose so much better. The lesson is puzzle enough. Do not make it necessary that the child shall seek a dictionary in order to understand your definitions.

And, secondly, the success of all teaching depends upon the hearty co-operation of the children. And not a few of the children either. All must work together. It is far easier to stand up and deliver certain theories like an oracle than it is to teach the simplest lesson. For the very word "teach," implies reception by the taught. We could not be said to teach inanimate things, though we might address them all day long. There must be answering work, or rather responsive work—the little minds following and receiving the facts you put forth.

But it is difficult for children long to sustain attention unaided. It should be your aim to arrest and retain it in various ways. First of all, find out how much information on the subject the children are already possessed of. Make this clear and plain to them. Certain things are—they see that clearly; then proceed from this to that of which as yet they are ignorant. Do this not by just stating the thing they ought to know, and making them repeat it after you; lead them to make discoveries for themselves. You can do this by a series of judicious questions taking them up to the very point you wish to bring out, till at last the idea breaks over their minds as to the truth you wish to bring out. This will interest the children, and fix the lesson in their minds; for it is by their own effort, rightly directed, that they obtain the desired knowledge.

Then as each step has been attained, go back a little and connect the whole. Because such a thing was—some other thing is—and something else will have to be. And when that something else has been made plain, then bind the whole lesson into one.

A greater help in keeping up attention does not exist than judicious, skilful questioning. It requires no small amount of ability to make a good questioner. Leading questions should never be used.

"Don't you think it was best to do so and so?"
or would it have been better to have done this or that? are bad forms of questions. Any question that requires only "yes" or "no" should be avoided. The children must think. They can say yes or no, or both—as many children will, directly they gather from the teacher's face that the first venture was a mistake—without much effort of the mind. Make them give a full answer. Let them tell the how, and the why, and the what.

And ask questions promiscuously, not regularly in turn. If you see attention wandering, instantly recall it in this way. Children will soon learn that it is possible for them to be "caught napping," and will endeavour to keep up to their work. And it is a good thing to do, if it can be done

quickly, to lead the class to decide the correctness or the incorrectness of the answer. This may be done without the least ill will. "Who thinks this answer might be improved? Tell me how, dear?" "Supposing the other could have been right, what might we have expected?" and so on.

And lead your children, as far as possible, to attach definite ideas to words. They are so apt to treat them as words only. "A mountain" should bring to their minds some definite object; through the eye of their imagination it should become of a certain height, or bare, or clothed with verdure and flowers, or thickly wooded in places, or sloping or steep. You should do all in your power to help them in this. I had rather a child pictured a scene somewhat erroneously than make no picture of it at all.

For this realising of scenes spoken of, or events touched upon, is of great importance, especially in all Bible teaching. Without it those precious words lose half their effect. Take one verse only as an instance of what I mean.

"And seeing the multitudes He went up into a mountain, and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him."

How many children have conned these words over and over, and have never entered into the picture or scene.

The multitude.—People of all kinds, sick and healthy, young and old, poor and rich, men and women, friends with loving gaze, foes looking malice or ridicule, all gathered to listen to His words.

The mountain.—The soft green verdure and sweet flowers, the gentle slopes, the sea view far away on the one side, and the Jordan like a silver thread on the other, visible from its summit, and the soft, cool refreshing breeze blowing over it.

The Master.—His loving tender look; His sad, sweet manner, as one bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, turning His eyes all ways to meet the gaze of those who crowded round Him. And with that look in those eyes that seemed to pierce the innermost heart of those before Him, He looked on them, and as He looked every circumstance connected with them was as clear to Him as the noonday. And as He uttered words especially suitable to these circumstances, His eyes would search out those who would be most affected by them.

The disciples.—The throng of twelve, working their way through the crowd, who were not disposed to let any one get in front of them. They might, perhaps, have given way to some well-known scribe or important Pharisee, but these poor fishermen, with the marks of their calling fresh upon their clothing, they would not be very willing to let them pass. So they would have to beg or force a passage where they could; and perhaps they got separated. Impulsive Peter would be likely to make his way much better than loving, gentle John; and they would arrive,

one after the other, all flushed, and eager, and hot with their up-hill difficult climb.

When He was set.—Doubtless he chose the highest place, where the folks round could best see Him; and as soon as He was settled, there would break over the crowd the hush of expectation, and there would be a leaning forward to catch every word. Mothers would restrain even their tiny babes, and the little children would be impressed by the general stillness and be quiet as others were.

When we remember, by our own personal experience, how much longer we retain a recollection of a passage which we have followed up in thought in this way, and also how much more we appreciated the beauty or the force of such passages, surely we can never cease to lead our children to form habits which will give like benefit. If, as they hear or read, their minds are impressed with real scenes and not words, how different will be the result.

And this is especially the case with God's Word. It rests with the teacher, in great measure, to make this blessed gift as a valley of dry bones, or a garden full of beauty.

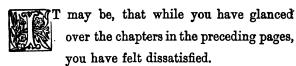
Try and realise for yourself what the effect of such teaching, with respect to God's Word, will be likely to have on a child's whole life. If in their early years the teaching of this book is a living reality to them, if their sympathies go with its histories, if their love is stirred by its tenderness, and their consciences impressed by its precepts, will they be likely to join the ranks of infidelity and atheism? Oh, surely no. "My word shall not return unto me void; it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereunto I send it."





#### VII.

## The Aim.



You feel yourself to be a practical teacher; day by day, and week by week, you are exercising your very best powers among your children, and you know from experience that there are difficulties many and great in your profession, which must be met bravely, and in some way mastered. You feel that there are discouragements and disappointments on every side, and you think I must have forgotten that the way was rough and the burden heavy.

No; I have never forgotten it. I know what

it is to have weary days and sleepless nights over just such work. I know what it is to cry out with bitter anguish, "The burden is more than I am able to bear," and, "These people are too hard for me." And yet I have written of setting free the angel in every child's life; of keeping self altogether in the background while striving after the child's good; and of working with singleness of heart and aim for this thing more than for any other.

Did I dare do otherwise? Was it left for such as I am to plant your standard higher or lower? Think a moment of these words—

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."

"Who went about doing good, for God was with Him."

Who among us, after reading these words, will feel justified in saying any aim is too high?

Not once through all God's Word are we told to copy one another. In the Old Testament we have —"Be ye holy, for I am holy," repeated over and over. In the New Testament we are all familiar with like words from the lips of our Great Teacher—

"Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect."

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful."

"Forgive, as your Father in heaven forgiveth you."

It is of little consequence to us that we know well how impossible it is for us here ever to attain the perfection we aim at, either in our work or in our own souls; but this is no reason why we should be discouraged.

"He who aims at the sun shoots higher than he who aims at a tree."

Even if we could err in this way, as so many do err in its opposite, it would be far better for

ourselves to be striving after excellence we never can reach, than to be satisfied with a standpoint which we come at more easily.

Aim at the highest good for your children, then, and though this highest good will not always leave you in the highest place, you will be nearer the Master for your effort. He who used his talents to the best advantage soon had more committed to him. As you in your little place, with your few opportunities of doing good, earnestly strive and work and pray to do to the full the Lord's will concerning this work, you will find your own soul ripen under your effort and your work prosper. You may never know how far your influence may spread. You may be like one who casts a stone into a river—the stone touches only one place, but the circles which proceed from the touch spread and multiply, growing wider and reaching further until the whole face of the stream is stirred by your one effort.

There is something very expressive in those

words, "Stand therefore," "Having done all to stand." The armour is to be put on; we are to forego neither helmet, nor breastplate, nor sword, and then with our faces towards the foe we are neither to flinch nor falter, but to stand—ready for anything, ready for everything which will further the Lord's cause.

And perhaps one reason why we all feel more keenly the discouragement of which we spoke just now, is that we look too far backward and too far forward as to results. If only we could be content with day by day effort! If we could begin every morning with a zeal and love all fresh, an enthusiasm just kindled with living coal from off God's altar; and putting yesterday's failures or to-morrow's doubts altogether in the background, just work, day by day, according to the grace given unto us.

"Surely a day is not so long a time to endure. There are not so many hours between rising up and lying down but that I could manage, if I really prayed, and really strove, to be watchful and pure, and self-denying and zealous in my work. God requires my services day by day, and will graciously recompense me day by day, if I am true to Him, and lead me on day by day, and give me the support of a day in its day, and the grace of a day in its day" (Dr. Goulbourn).

Day by day! Faithfully to work the work committed unto us. He, the Master, can bless and give the increase. He has promised to do so, He is waiting to do so. Ask for the blessing, and expect the blessing, and wait for the blessing, then. Faithfully!—no perhaps, or it may be, with regard to the end. God's will and shall suggests no manner of doubt; let us leave it with Him, then.

And hopefully too. Without this the work will drag. There must be cheery brightness and hearty gladness of spirit in all we do for His little ones. Our lives are given to Him. Our work is from His hand. The nearer we get to

Him the more must joyful gladness of spirit be the spring of every effort. Those whose minds are stayed on Him have perfect peace, perfect faith, and perfect hope, as well as perfect love.

Ah, yes, love! love to Him first, and then love to every child our eyes rest upon. We know how hard the struggle will be for each one of them, if they are to be the Lord's servants. We know how much of trial they will have to meet, only in making their way here; the dangers lie thick around them, the snares are many. And as we remember all this our hearts must yearn over them with tender love. They are ours for so short a space; only too soon they will pass from us into the very thick of the fight. It may be that, if we fail them now, that never again will they be brought under good influences.

We dare not hesitate; we must not falter then; while we linger, evil is being established and right feelings blunted. We cannot be content to go with the crowd and do as others do. We are

marked beings, singled out and set apart from all the rest of the world, by every child under our influence. Every word we say, every deed we do; nay, even our very manner and style of dress, have an extra amount of importance in their eyes, because we do it. The children pin their faith to us. Our opinion and our warranty make a thing quite indisputable in their eyes. Let us take these truths to our souls in earnest, humble prayer.

Here is the summing up of the whole matter. The more faithfully and consistently we strive to work the more we shall feel our own weakness; the more we feel our own weakness the more shall we seek God's help—earnestly and constantly seek it; and the more we seek this help the more abundantly will that work be blessed.

"Lord of the living harvest

That whitens o'er the plain,

Where angels soon shall gather

The sheaves of golden grain;

Accept these hands to labour,

These hearts to trust and love,
And deign with them to hasten
Thy kingdom from above.

"As labourers in Thy vineyard
Still faithful may we be,
Content to bear the burden
Of weary days for Thee.
We ask no other wages
When Thou shalt call us home,
But to have shared the travail
Which makes Thy kingdom come,"



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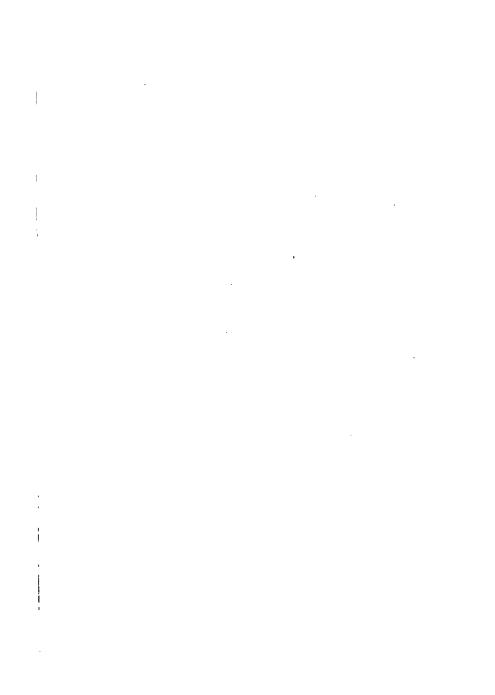
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